

**Outline of IAMAS** ■■■■■■■■

Our school is located approximately in the center of Japan, in Ogaki City, Gifu Prefecture. Our faculty and students are active worldwide, and our school is well-known nationally and internationally by the acronym "IAMAS." Gifu Prefecture has been putting a great deal of effort into the cultivation of an advanced Information Technology industry, centering on Softopia Japan, an establishment for nurturing businesses, also located in Ogaki. IAMAS is owned by the Prefecture, and was designed as an education and training institution closely related to the Prefecture's policies. Furthermore, the first president of IAMAS, Itsuo Sakane, firmly believed that the unification of science and art would pave the way for a new future of humanity and he developed IAMAS into a unique type of institution that was completely new in Japan. In other words, IAMAS is neither simply a school for training engineers, nor is it an art school aimed at producing artists. Here we are engaged in education and research across a diverse range of areas from art and design to engineering based on digital technology, and our graduates reflect this in the diverse fields in which they are active.

**Composition of IAMAS** ■■■■■■■■

IAMAS was first established in 1996 as the International Academy of Media Arts and Sciences, a vocational college, and subsequently in 2001, part of the school became a graduate school, the Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences. Both schools have courses lasting 2 years. The Academy is open to high school graduates, whereas the Institute is solely a graduate course for obtaining a Masters qualification. IAMAS is a very small and elite school with 30 students in each year group of the Academy and 20 per year group in the Institute. For this number of students there are 30 full-time faculty and approximately 20 other staff, making a total of about 150 IAMAS members. IAMAS has a very international flavor, with 14 nationalities represented. The Academy aims to train creators, providing them with advanced technical skills, whereas the Institute is more focused on educating people who will be active in a wider range of areas related to media culture. However, the Academy and Institute are administered as one school, and there is an active exchange by the faculty and students, so there is a sense that the two schools are really combined into one. As a result of the prefectural policy, the facilities are extremely well-equipped, and students are able to freely conduct research and creative activities 24 hours a day.



## Curriculum

The Academy is comprised of 4 courses: Advanced Network Design, Computer Generated Image, Designing for Information Technology and Digital Sensory Programming, and the Institute has 4 studios: Interactive Media, Time based Media, Interface and Media Aesthetics. Although each faculty member and student is allocated to one of these courses or studios they are not confined to them and are encouraged to carry out research and create works in collaboration with all the courses and studios. This especially applies to the project subjects. A large-scale practical theme relating to society or the local region is chosen and teachers and students from different courses and studios work on it together. This is a special feature of IAMAS' curriculum. Such projects include short-term programs created for local TV stations. Connections with local industries centering on manufacturing are gradually becoming more active and students also undertake internships at these companies.

## Center for Media Culture

The Center for Media Culture (CMC) is IAMAS' main channel of communication with the outside, and is the center of all its external activities. The current exhibition has also been organized by CMC. In 2003 IAMAS held an international media art contest in collaboration with UNESCO and invited the winner to IAMAS for 6 months as artist-in-residence. The Artist in Residence Program has been carried out since the opening of IAMAS. Under this program 2 artists are invited to IAMAS to create their works every year. CMC is also responsible for the biannual interactive art exhibition "Interaction," which has been held since the opening of IAMAS. However, starting from this year, the contents and the form of the exhibition has changed and it has become a media art festival held under the name of "Ogaki Biennale" for which vacant buildings in the center of Ogaki, show windows, walls of buildings, etc. are used. We plan to continue the practice of bringing art into the everyday life of Gifu citizens in the future as well.

## Looking to the future

IAMAS has so far established links with a variety of education and research institutions worldwide, and we hope to further expand such relationships in the future. We will also work to improve our systems for accepting foreign students to make it easier for students from all over the world to study at IAMAS. Ogaki, where IAMAS is located, is, like Linz, a peaceful city surrounded by countryside, and is an ideal environment to concentrate on research and creative activities without being compromised by passing fads, while thinking about what kind of future we would like and what our role should be. We are looking forward to making many new friends through this exhibition and having them visit IAMAS in Ogaki.

